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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No.

684.2902

First Named Inventor or Application Identifier

MASAAKI NAKABAYASHI, ET AL.

Express Mail Label No.

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

ADDRESS TO:

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1. ☒ Fee Transmittal Form
(Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☒ Specification Total Pages
3. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) Total Sheets
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration Total Pages
- a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
- b. ☒ Unexecuted for information purposes
- c. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
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[Note Box 5 below]
- i. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed Statement attached deleting
inventor(s) named in the prior application, see
37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☐ Incorporation By Reference (useable if Box 4c is checked)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of
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ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

8. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement ☐ Power of Attorney
(when there is an assignee)
10. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
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Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 Citations
12. ☒ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
14. ☐ Small Entity ☐ Statement filed in prior application
Statement(s) Status still proper and desired
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CLAIMS	(1) FOR	(2) NUMBER FILED	(3) NUMBER EXTRA	(4) RATE	(5) CALCULATIONS
	TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(c))	34-20 =	14	X \$ 18.00 =	\$ 252.00
	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 cfr 1.16(b))	7-3 =	4	X \$ 78.00 =	\$ 312.00
	MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS (if applicable) (37 CFR 1.16(d))			\$ 260.00 =	\$ 260.00
				BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a))	\$ 760.00
	Total of above Calculations =				\$1584.00
	Reduction by 50% for filing by small entity (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28).				
	TOTAL =				\$1584.00

19. Small entity status

- a. ☐ A Small entity statement is enclosed
- b. ☐ A small entity statement was filed in the prior nonprovisional application and such status is still proper and desired.
- c. ☐ Is no longer claimed.

20. ☒ A check in the amount of \$ 1584.00 to cover the filing fee is enclosed.

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- a. ☒ Fees required under 37 CFR 1.16.
- b. ☒ Fees required under 37 CFR 1.17.
- c. ☐ Fees required under 37 CFR 1.18.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, ATTORNEY, OR AGENT REQUIRED	
NAME	T. Thomas C. Gellenthien - Reg. No. 39,683
SIGNATURE	<i>Tom Gellenthien</i>
DATE	September 23, 1999

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684.2902

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:)
MASAAKI NAKABAYASHI, ET AL.) Examiner: Unknown
Appln. No.: To be assigned) Group Art Unit: Unknown
Filed: Concurrently Herewith)
For: DIFFRACTIVE OPTICAL) September 23, 1999
ELEMENT AND METHOD OF)
MANUFACTURE OF THE SAME)

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231
Box: Patent Application

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

Prior to examination on the merits, kindly amend the
above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 6, line 2, please change "Claims 1-5" to
--Claims 1-4--.

Claim 9, line 2, please change "Claims 1-8" to
--Claims 1-4, 7 and 8--.

Claim 10, line 2, please change "Claims 1-8" to
--Claims 1-4, 7 and 8--.

Claim 13, line 2, please change "Claims 1-8" to
--Claims 1-4, 7 and 8--.

Claim 14, line 3, please change "Claims 9 or 10" to
-Claim 9--.

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in the application. Claims
1-4, 7, 8 and 11 are independent.

Claims 6, 9, 10, 13, and 14 have been amended to
correct improper multiple dependencies. Applicants request
favorable consideration and allowance of the subject application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in
our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All
correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed
address.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Gellenthien
Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 39,683

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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DIFFRACTIVE OPTICAL ELEMENT AND
METHOD OF MANUFACTURE OF THE SAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION AND RELATED ART

5 This invention relates to a diffractive
optical element and method of manufacture of the same. .

Conventionally, the correction of chromatic
aberration of an optical system is made by using a
combination of optical elements made of glass
10 materials which are different in dispersion. In place
of a dioptric system such as a lens, a diffractive
optical system may be used therefor ("SPIE", Vol.1354,
Nos. 24-37).

Where a diffractive surface is to be added to
15 an optical system which is designed for use with
broadband light such as light of visible region, it is
important that the diffraction efficiency, with
respect to the design order, of the diffractive
surface in the wavelength region to be used is kept
20 high. Otherwise, lights of orders other than the
design order have a large diffraction angle,
increasing with the difference in diffraction order,
such that the deviation of focal distance becomes
large. Upon an image plane, it appears as defocus
25 and, when a high luminance light source is there, side
lobes will be produced in the image.

Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application, Laid-

Open No. 133149/1998 and Japanese Laid-Open Patent
Application, Laid-Open No.127322/1997 show a
diffractive optical element with a laminated structure
of double-layer diffraction gratings, when used in an
5 optical system, may increase the diffraction
efficiency of the light, at the design order, within a
wavelength region to be used and, therefore, it may
decrease the diffraction efficiency of the light of
orders other than the design order. Use of such
10 diffractive optical element will therefore be
effective to improve the quality in image and in
information. However, such diffractive optical
element is difficult to manufacture and it needs
complicated and expensive processes.

15 In consideration of the above, a diffractive
optical element having a multilayered structure,
having two or more layers, may be manufactured in
accordance with a photolithographic process which is
employed in semiconductor device manufacturing
20 processes. According to such photolithographic
process, a photosensitive resin called "photoresist"
is patterned into a fine pattern through an exposure
operation and a development operation and, thereafter,
an etching operation is made, whereby a fine
25 photoresist pattern is transferred to a substrate.

Figures 1A - 1J are schematic and sectional
views for explaining manufacturing processes for a

diffraction grating
of eight-level step-like structure according to the
photolithographic method described above. In Figure
1A, a photoresist 1 is applied to a substrate 1 by
5 using a spinner, and then, light L is projected
thereto to perform patterning exposure. In Figure 1B,
a development operation, a rinsing treatment and a
post-baking treatment are performed. In Figure 1C, an
10 etching operation is made, and then, a washing
operation is performed to remove the remaining
photoresist 2. By this, a two-level step-like
structure is produced. In Figures 1D - 1F, similar
operations as in Figures 1A - 1C are repeated, whereby
a four-level step-like structure is produced.
15 Further, by repeating operations in Figures 1G - 1I,
an eight-level step-like structure such as shown in
Figure 1J is completed.

A diffractive optical element of dual-layer
structure can be produced by use of a mold. Figures
20 2A - 2I are schematic and sectional views, showing the
processes for manufacture of such diffractive optical
element of dual-layer structure. In Figure 2A, an
organic coating material 4 is put on a quartz glass
substrate 3, and a first mold 5 of quartz glass
25 material is placed thereon. An ultraviolet radiation
is projected thereto, whereby a step-like structure of
the organic coating material 4 as shown in Figure 2B

is produced. Subsequently, an ion etching operation is made in Figure 2C, whereby a diffraction grating 6 of quartz glass material is produced as shown in Figure 2D.

5 In Figure 2E, a TiO_2 film 7 is formed on the quartz glass diffraction grating 6, and in Figure 2F, an organic coating material 4 is put on the TiO_2 film 7. Further, a second mold 8 of quartz glass material, having a step-like shape formed in inverse direction
10 relative to the first mold 5, is put on it. An ultraviolet radiation is then projected thereto, whereby a step-like structure of the organic coating material 4 such as shown in Figure 2G is produced. In Figure 2H, an ion etching operation is made again,
15 whereby a high dispersion diffraction grating 9 of TiO_2 film is formed on the quartz glass diffraction grating 6.

If, however, there occurs an unexpected deviation between diffraction gratings to be
20 accumulated, the diffraction efficiency of light of the order or orders different from the design order substantially increases, which causes considerable deterioration of the image quality. It is therefore necessary to adjust the positioning, at high
25 precision, of the diffraction gratings to be accumulated for manufacture of an accumulation type diffraction grating.

Generally, for optical axis adjustment where two dioptric lenses are adhered to each other, the two adhered lenses may be rotated with respect to the optical axis so as to reduce the eccentric amount of the light transmitted. However, as regards a diffraction grating to be used as a diffraction lens, for example, since it uses its advantage of an achromatic effect, the focal length as a lens is long and, on the other hand, the eccentric amount of the light transmitted is small. Therefore, the optical axis adjustment method described above can not easily be used. Further, this method is not usable in the processes shown in Figures 2A - 2I.

Each diffraction grating may be formed with an alignment mark so that the mark is registered with a certain reference. If this operation is made manually, the efficiency of adjustment becomes very low and it takes a very long time. If it is made automatically through image processing, the cost of necessary equipment increases and thus the production cost becomes high.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a diffractive optical element having diffraction gratings positioned accurately.

It is another object of the present invention

In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess formed on an outside of one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion formed on an outside of the other diffraction grating surface; and that the pair of diffraction grating surfaces are defined on materials having different refractive indices and different dispersions and being formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height of blazed or binary, close to it, such that a largest optical path difference to be applied to light rays passing through the diffraction grating surfaces with respect to plural wavelengths becomes equal to a multiple, by an integral number, of the wavelength.

In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of
25 diffraction grating surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess formed outside an optically

effective region of one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion formed outside an optically effective region of the other diffraction grating surface; and that the pair of
5 diffraction grating surfaces are defined on materials having different refractive indices and different dispersions and being formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height close to it, such that a largest optical path difference to be applied to light rays
10 passing through the diffraction grating surfaces with respect to each of plural wavelengths becomes equal to a multiple, by an integral number, of the wavelength.

In accordance with a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess formed on an outside of one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion formed on an outside of the other diffraction grating surface; and that the pair of diffraction grating surfaces are defined on materials having different refractive indices and different dispersions and being formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height close to it, such that a diffraction efficiency of diffraction light of a particular order, such as one of positive and negative

first order, with respect to plural wavelengths,
becomes equal to or nearly equal to 100%.

In accordance with a fourth aspect of the
present invention, there is provided a diffractive
5 optical element having plural diffraction grating
surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of
diffraction grating surfaces are positioned so that a
protrusion and/or a recess formed outside an optically
effective region of one diffraction grating surface
10 engages with a recess and/or a protrusion formed
outside an optically effective region of the other
diffraction grating surface; and that the pair of
diffraction grating surfaces are defined on materials
having different refractive indices and different
15 dispersions and being formed into a kinoform, or a
shape and a height close to it, such that a
diffraction efficiency of diffraction light of a
particular order, such as one of positive and negative
first order, with respect to plural wavelengths,
20 becomes equal to or nearly equal to 100%.

In one preferred form of these aspects of the
present invention, the pair of diffraction gratings
are disposed opposed to each other with a space such
as by an air interposed therebetween.

25 In a further preferred form of these aspects
of the present invention, the protrusion and the
recess have a sectional shape of one of a triangle

shape, a trapezoidal shape and a semi-circular shape.

In accordance with a fifth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are mutually positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed on one diffraction grating surface, engages with a recess and/or a protrusion having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed on the other diffraction grating surface.

In accordance with a sixth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are mutually positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed outside an optically effective region of one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed outside an optically effective

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present invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 Figures 1A - 1J are schematic and sectional views for explaining manufacturing processes for a mono-layer step-like diffraction grating.

10 Figures 2A - 2I are schematic and sectional views for explaining manufacturing processes for an accumulation type step-like diffraction grating.

 Figure 3 is a schematic and sectional view for explaining a diffractive optical element according to an embodiment of the present invention.

15 Figures 4A - 4E are schematic and sectional views for explaining manufacturing processes for the diffractive optical element of Figure 3.

 Figures 5 and 6 are schematic views, respectively, for explaining alignment marks.

20 Figure 7 is a schematic and sectional view of a diffractive optical element having accumulated diffraction gratings of glass and resin.

 Figure 8 is a schematic and sectional view of a diffractive optical element having accumulated blazed-type diffraction gratings.

25 Figure 9 is a front view of a diffractive optical element according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 11 is a schematic and side view of the
5 camera of Figure 10.

Figure 13 is an enlarged section of an outer
10 peripheral portion of an accumulation type diffractive
optical element.

Figure 15 is an enlarged section of an outer
15 peripheral portion of a mold.

Figure 17 is an enlarged section of an outer peripheral portion of a mold.

Figure 19 is a sectional view of a glass substrate and a diffraction grating.

Figure 20 is a sectional view of a mold and an accumulation type diffractive optical element, according to another embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 21 is a sectional view of an accumulation type diffractive optical element.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

5 Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described, first with reference to Figures 3 - 11 of the accompanying drawings.

Figure 3 is a sectional view of a diffractive optical element (diffraction type lens) of eight-level
10 step-like structure according to a first embodiment of the present invention. There is a glass substrate 10 on which a first diffraction grating (first periodic structure) 11 is formed. There is a second
15 diffraction grating (second periodic structure) 12 formed on the first diffraction grating 11. The first diffraction grating 11 is formed by molding a photo-setting resin containing, as a main component, denatured epoxyacrylate having a high refractive index and a large dispersion. The second diffraction
20 grating 12 is formed by molding an acrylate series ultraviolet radiation setting resin of low dispersion. As regards the selection of these resins, it is determined in accordance with the combination of two or more resin materials, on the basis of optical
25 design. Thus, depending on the use, an appropriate selection can be done and, additionally, the order of accumulation can be selected as desired.

The following resins may be used as a design example of a diffractive optical element according to this embodiment.

5 First Layer Material:

Main Component: denatured epoxyacrylate
Refractive Index after Setting: 1.598
Abbe Constant: 28

10 Second Layer Material:

Main Component: urethane denatured polyester
acrylate

Refractive Index after Setting: 1.525

Abbe Constant: 50.8

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Here, in order to provide a grating structure with which light of a used wavelength region is concentrated to a particular order, it is necessary that a high diffraction efficiency (100% or approximately 100%) is obtained with respect to C-line of a wavelength 486.13 nm and F-line of a wavelength 656.27 nm, for example. To this end, the diffraction gratings should satisfy the following conditions.

$$\begin{aligned} 25 \quad 656.27/8 &= [(\text{Na}_F-1) \cdot d_a - (\text{Nb}_F-1) \cdot d_b] \\ 486.13/8 &= [(\text{Na}_C-1) \cdot d_a - (\text{Nb}_C-1) \cdot d_b] \end{aligned}$$

where

N_{aF} is the refractive index of the first layer
with respect to the F-line;

N_{bF} is the refractive index of the second layer
with respect to the F-line;

5 N_{aC} is the refractive index of the first layer
with respect to the C-line;

N_{bC} is the refractive index of the second layer
with respect to the C-line;

10 d_a is the height (level difference) of the
diffraction grating of the first layer; and

d_b is the height (level difference) of the
diffraction grating of the second layer.

15 An example of the shape and size satisfying
these conditions may be:

$$d_a = 2355 \text{ nm}$$

$$d_b = 2818 \text{ nm}$$

20 Figures 4A - 4E are sectional views for
explaining manufacturing processes for a diffractive
optical element such as shown in Figure 3. First, in
Figure 4A, the surface of a quartz glass substrate 10
on which a first diffraction grating 12 is to be
formed is coated uniformly with silane coupling, by
25 using a spinner. Then, it is dried in an oven. The
coupling has a function that, in the mold releasing,
the adherence between the substrate 10 of quartz glass

and the resin material 13 of the first layer (Figure 4B) becomes larger than the exfoliation property between a quartz first mold 14 of the first layer and the resin material 13 of the first layer, such that
5 the molded resin material 13 is sufficiently fixed on the quartz glass substrate 10.

In Figure 4B, the first mold 14 of quartz glass is used to perform the molding to provide a quartz glass with a step-like diffraction grating
10 shape, and ultraviolet radiation is projected thereto to set the same. Then, as the first mold 14 is released, a first diffraction grating 11 such as shown in Figure 4C is produced.

Subsequently, in Figure 4D, a second-layer
15 resin material 15 is put on the first diffraction grating 11. By using a second mold 16, it is molded and then is set, in a similar manner as described above. By this, a dual-layer composite diffraction grating such as shown in Figure 2E is produced.

20 The second-layer diffraction grating 12 should be aligned with the first-layer diffraction grating 11 very precisely. If there is any misalignment therebetween, not only the diffraction efficiency enhancement effect to be obtained by
25 designing diffraction gratings in the unit of pitch degrades but also the diffraction itself is disturbed such that the correct function is lost. In

consideration of it, in this embodiment, as shown in
Figures 5 and 6, alignment marks 11a are transferred
to the substrate 10 in the molding of the first layer,
on the basis of recesses 14a formed in the first mold
14. Then, by registering recesses 16a of the second,
mold 16 with respect to these marks, high precision
alignment is accomplished.

If, in the molding of the second layer
diffraction grating 12, the thickness of its optical
resin material 15 is smaller than the height of the
first layer diffraction grating 11, since the second
mold 16 should be fitted with the grating structure of
ultraviolet radiation setting resin material on the
quartz substrate, the accurateness of alignment and
the setting of fitting size are difficult to
accomplish. Additionally, there is a possibility that
the second mold 16 and the first layer diffraction
grating 11 are damaged. In order to avoid this, since
in the design of a diffractive optical element the
order of layers is theoretically not influential, a
layer of smaller grating height may be placed on the
bottom ground side.

The second layer diffraction grating 12 has
to be completely and intimately contacted to the first
layer diffraction grating 11 after the mold releasing.
Therefore, in order that the resin materials have
sufficient adhesion strength against the mold

releasing, a mold releasing agent application treatment may be made to the mold to improve the mold releasing property. In the mold releasing operation, a particular note should be paid to assure that, after
5 the sample is placed in a sufficiently diluted releasing agent, vapor washing or the like is made to prevent that an excessive releasing agent disturbs the fine shape.

The thickness of the resins being molded in
10 two layers is practically larger than the total thickness of the layers. Even through heating to decrease the viscosity or through pressure molding, it does not reach the thickness of only the diffraction grating portion. However, if the thickness is uniform
15 over the grating surface, the influence to the whole light flux passing therethrough is even and, thus, there is no inconvenience in the performance as a diffraction grating. It is therefore important to make the thickness of each layer uniform. Further,
20 since in a diffractive optical element of short focus, the picture angle becomes large. If, therefore, the resin thickness is large, due to the picture angle, the direction of light shifts within the element such that the diffraction efficiency enhancement effect
25 reduces. For this reason, it is important that the resin thickness is kept small as much as possible and that the element design is made while fully taking

into account the picture angle and the resin thickness.

The quartz mold for the resin material can be manufactured through a photolithographic process. For example, in a case where the shape of the mold to be transferred is a step-like grating, as in the example of Figures 1A - 1J, it may be produced while repeating the photolithographic process plural times. Generally, since a resin of high refractive index has a low weathering resistance, a relatively stable resin should desirably be used as the second layer to hold the performance.

Figure 7 is a sectional view of a second embodiment, wherein a replica diffraction grating 12 is formed on a diffraction grating 17 which is defined by etching a lanthanum glass.

First Layer Material:

	Main Component:	lanthanum glass
20	Refractive Index:	1.678
	Abbe Constant:	55.3

Second Layer Material:

25 Main Component: denatured epoxyacrylate
 Refractive Index after Setting: 1.598
 Abbe Constant: 28

As regards the process for the lanthanum glass, there are a photographic method and a method in which a coating material is applied to a lanthanum glass substrate and in which anisotropic etching is made thereto to transfer the shape to the lanthanum glass surface. The latter may be advantageous in respect to the productivity. In any of these methods, a diffraction grating 17 is formed and, additionally, alignment marks 11a such as shown in Figure 5 or 6 are formed in a portion other than the diffraction grating 17. By registering the mold for the replica diffraction grating 12 with these alignment marks, high precision alignment is accomplished.

Like the first embodiment, a second diffraction grating is formed by using a resin. Here, the shape that satisfies the diffraction efficiency enhancement condition is such as follows.

Level Difference (Step Height) of First Layer
Diffraction Grating $d_a = 2042 \text{ nm}$
Level Difference (Step Height) of First Layer
Diffraction Grating $d_a = 2204 \text{ nm}$

It is to be noted that, in regard to glass materials other than the lanthanum glass, a desired diffractive optical element can be produced through a similar optical design.

Further, it can be applied to a diffractive optical element having accumulation of two layers of blazed type (Kinoform) gratings, such as shown in Figure 8. Where the following relation is satisfied with respect to the combination of materials as in the first embodiment, the effect of dual layers as has been described hereinbefore can be retained.

$$m\lambda_D = (N_{aD}-1) \cdot d_a - (N_{bD}-1) \cdot d_b$$

$$m\lambda_F = (N_{aF}-1) \cdot d_a - (N_{bF}-1) \cdot d_b$$

$$m\lambda_C = (N_{aC}-1) \cdot d_a - (N_{bC}-1) \cdot d_b$$

where D , F and C are the wavelengths of the D-line, F-line and C-line, respectively, and N_{bD} is the refractive index of the second layer with respect to the D-line.

In an embodiment, the following heights are set, and a mold is made by cutting, by using a diamond bite.

First Layer Grating Height: $h_1 = 21.07$ micron

Second Layer Grating Height: $h_2 = 22.54$ micron

Figure 8 is a sectional view of a diffractive optical element of chopping-wave shape, according to a third embodiment. In the diffractive optical element of the second embodiment wherein the replica

diffraction grating 12 is formed on the diffraction
grating 17 defined by etching a lanthanum glass, a
diffraction grating 18 of chopping-wave shape, in
place of the step-like grating shape, is formed. As
5 regards the micro-processing of a glass, after a
photoresist is formed into a chopping wave shape as
calculated from the etching rate, anisotropic etching
is performed to accomplish it. Subsequently, like the
second embodiment, a second diffraction grating 19 is
10 molded by using a resin.

Figure 9 is a front view of a diffractive
optical element 20 according to any one of the
embodiments described hereinbefore. In one grating,
only the boundaries of each are illustrated by solid
15 lines, and the boundary lines of the step-like
structure in each grating pitch are omitted in
illustration. With this dual-layer diffractive
optical element 20, the diffraction efficiency of
diffraction light of the design order can be improved
20 over the whole used wavelength region. Therefore, a
superior optical performance can be provided. While
in this example a saw-tooth section (Kinoform) as
approximated by an eight-level step-like structure is
illustrated, the element can be manufactured through
25 approximation other than with eight levels, such as
four levels or sixteen levels, for example.

Figure 10 is a front view of a camera having

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a diffractive optical element 20. Figure 11 is a side view of this camera. The main body 21 of the camera has a photographic optical system 22 and a finder optical system 23. The diffractive optical element 20 can be provided at a desired position in the photographic optical system 32 or the finder optical system 33. Use of the diffractive optical element 20 in an optical system of an optical instrument such as a camera, for example, like the example described above, the optical performance of the optical instrument can be improved.

Further embodiments of the present invention will be described in conjunction with Figures 12 - 21.

Figure 12 is a sectional view of an accumulation type diffractive optical element 101 according to a fourth embodiment of the present invention. Figure 13 is an enlarged section of an outer peripheral portion of this diffractive optical element 101. The diffractive optical element 101 comprises a diffraction grating 103 which is made of a resin and is formed on a glass substrate 102a, and another diffraction grating 104 which is made of a different resin with the same pitch as the grating 103 and is adhered to a glass substrate 102b. Between these diffraction gratings 103 and 104, there is an air gap G of 1.5 micron.

The diffraction gratings 103 and 104 of this

embodiment have a blazed Kinoform grating shape. The diffraction grating 103 is made of a photo-setting resin having a high refractive index and a large dispersion, while the diffraction grating 104 is made of a photo-setting resin having a low refractive index and a small dispersion. As regards the selection of these resins, a combination or two or more resin materials may be determined on the basis of optical design.

Also, the grating shape such as grating height and pitch, for example, is dependent upon the use and the material. The grating shape may be a step-like shape called a binary shape, for example.

As regards the resin material of the diffraction grating 103 of this embodiment, methacrylate series ultraviolet radiation setting resin is used. The refractive index thereof after being set is 1.635, and its Abbe constant is 23. As regards the resin material of the diffraction grating 104, an urethane denatured polyester acrylate series ultraviolet radiation setting resin is used. The refractive index thereof after being set is 1.525, and its Abbe constant is 50.8.

In an accumulation type diffractive optical element 101 to be used in an optical instrument such as a camera, for example, the grating shapes have to be determined in regard to the respective materials so

that, with respect to the light of the used wavelength region such as c-line of a wavelength $\lambda = 565.27$ nm and g-line of a wavelength $\lambda = 435.83$ nm, for example, the light is concentrated to a particular order

5 (usually, one of positive and negative first orders, but other orders are possible) and a high diffraction efficiency (95 - 100%) is accomplished. The gratings of the diffraction gratings 103 and 104 are so determined that a largest optical path difference to
10 be applied to the light rays passing through them becomes equal to a multiple, by an integral number, of the wavelength, with respect to the light of plural wavelengths of c-line and g-line. As regards specific design examples for the determination, reference may
15 be made to Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application, Laid-Open No. 448100/1999. In this embodiment, the diffraction grating 103 has a grating height of 6.74 microns, while the diffraction grating 104 has a grating height of 9.50 microns. Also, the grating
20 pitch of the periodic structure that produces the diffraction effect becomes smaller as the distance away from the center of the diffraction grating. The smallest pitch is about 40 microns. The diffraction gratings 103 and 104 have the same pitch. They engage
25 with each other, at recesses 103a and protrusions 104a which are formed around and outside of the optically effective regions of them, in a ring-like shape or at

three or more locations.

Figure 14 is a sectional view of a mold 111 for producing the diffraction grating 103. Figure 15 is an enlarged view of an outer peripheral portion of this mold 111. This mold 111 is produced by KN
5 plating a super steel with a film thickness of several tens microns and then by cutting the plating film by use of a diamond bite. At the outside of the optically effective region of the mold 111, there is a
10 protrusion 112 for defining the recess 103a, which is formed by a cutting operation.

Similarly, Figure 16 is a sectional view of a mold 121 for producing the diffraction grating 104. Figure 17 is an enlarged view of an outer peripheral
15 portion of this mold 121. At the outside of the optically effective region of it, there is a recess 122 for defining the protrusion 104a. The positions of the protrusion 112 and the recess 122 from the center of the diffraction lens should be the same also
20 in the diffraction grating. Through practical cutting operations, the difference of them can be 1 micron or less.

As regards the protrusion 112 and the recess 122, an ordinary method is to mate a V-shaped section
25 with a semi-circular shape. Practically, however, the positioning at the contact between a plane and a circle is difficult in respect to the machining or in

5 There is a flat portion 122a of 5 microns at the
bottom of the V-shaped groove, this being to avoid
breakage of the molded article. The sectional shapes
of the protrusion 104a, recess 103a, recess 122 and
protrusion 112 are not limited to a triangular shape
10 such as illustrated, but they may be a trapezoidal
shape or semi-circular shape.

15 dispenser are applied onto the center of the molding
surface of the mold 11. However, with a grating shape
of a pitch 40 microns and a grating height 10 microns,
airs are forced into the fine shape as the resin is
diffused along the mold 111, causing a fault in shape
20 of the molded article. In consideration of it, as the
resin is diffused up to the protrusion 112 outside the
optically effective region of the mold, de-foaming
treatment may preferably be made in a vacuum
container, with a reduced pressure of about 10 mmHg.

25 After such de-foaming treatment, as shown in
Figure 18, a very small amount of resin is applied, by
drops, to the center of the glass substrate 102 which

66260" 094460
serves as a substrate of a molded article, and this resin is contacted to the resin on the mold 111. The glass substrate 102a is gradually moved down, and then it is held fixed at the position that assures a
5 desired thickness.

Subsequently, since the resin material used in this embodiment is a photo-setting resin, ultraviolet rays are projected from the glass substrate 2a side to thereby temporally set the resin.
10 Then, the periphery of the glass substrate 102a is pulled up, whereby the substrate is released from the mold together with the diffraction grating 3. By this, as shown in Figure 19, a diffraction grating 103 with a recess 103a can be produced on the glass
15 substrate 102a. For enhanced adhesion with the resin, the glass substrate 102a is coated with a silane coupling beforehand, by using a spinner, and after that, it is dried in an oven.

Similar sequential operations are made while
20 using an urethane denatured polyester acrylate series ultraviolet radiation setting resin as the mold 121, and a diffraction grating 104 with a protrusion 4a can be produced upon the glass substrate 102b (Figure 12).

Since, in the molding method of this
25 embodiment, as the resin is set, the diffraction gratings 103 and 104 as well as the glass substrates 102a and 102b as a whole are deformed by contraction,

there is a limitation in regard to the thicknesses of the resin and glass substrates 102a and 102b. In this embodiment, the film thickness of the resin is 50 microns and, thus, the height of the protrusion/recess is made equal to 80 microns.

Subsequently, one of the diffraction gratings 103 and 104 produced in accordance with the method described above is held fixed by using a fixing tool. A thioxotropy series photo-setting adhesive agent of low fluidity is applied, by drops, to plural locations outside the recess 103a or protrusion 104a and along a circumferential direction. The other diffraction grating is then placed to face the molding surface side, and they are put together with their centers aligned. By this, an accumulation type diffractive optical element 101 having an accumulated layer structure is produced. Here, an interference fringe can be observed in the diffraction gratings 103 and 104, such that the rough adjustment for the centering may be done on the basis of it. Subsequently, after they are combined so that the circles of the recess 103a and protrusion 104a are registered with each other, ultraviolet rays are projected for the setting, whereby the accumulation type diffractive optical element 101 can be completed.

Figure 20 is a sectional view of an accumulation type diffractive optical element 131

according to a fifth embodiment of the present invention. While in the preceding embodiment two diffraction gratings 103 and 104 are adhered with each other to produce a diffractive optical element 101 of accumulated layer structure, in this embodiment a
5 second layer diffraction grating 133 is directly accumulated upon a first layer diffraction grating 132 whereby an accumulation diffractive optical element 131 is produced.

10 Where accumulation molding is to be made, if in the molding of the second layer diffraction grating 133, the thickness of the second layer resin is smaller than the height of the first layer diffraction grating 132, there is a possibility that the mold 134
15 and the first layer diffraction grating 132 is broken. In consideration of it, the diffraction grating of lower grating height is formed in the first layer at the bottom base side. Also, since in the design of an optical element, theoretically there is no dependency
20 upon the order of layers accumulated, any optical element may be placed above without inconvenience.

First, like the preceding embodiment, a mold (not shown) is used to form a diffraction grating 132 on the glass substrate 102. Also, a recess 132a is
25 formed outside the optically effective region of the diffraction grating 132 on the glass substrate 102. The height of the grating shape of the mold 134 for

forming a diffraction grating 133 is set to 2.76 microns, as subtracting the grating height of the diffraction grating 132, and a protrusion 134a like the first embodiment is provided.

5 Then, by engaging the recess 132a formed on the diffraction grating 132 and the protrusion 134a provided on the mold 134, the positioning of the mold 134 can be accomplished. By injecting a resin into the gap between the diffraction grating 132 and the
10 mold 134, a diffraction grating 133 can be produced. Thereafter, as shown in Figure 21, the mold 134 is released, whereby diffraction gratings 132 and 133 can be formed in accumulation upon the glass substrate 102.

15 After release from the mold 134, the diffraction grating 133 should be intimately adhered to the first layer diffraction grating 132. While the adhesion between the diffraction gratings 132 and 133 needs an adhesion strength of a level that prevents
20 releasing, as regards the mold 134, a particular note should be paid to perform a mold releasing treatment to improve the releasing property, wherein it is placed in a sufficiently diluted mold releasing agent beforehand and then it is vapor washed, for example,
25 so that excessive mold releasing agent disturbs the fine shape.

 Generally, the thickness of the diffraction

grating 133 molded in the second layer becomes large. Even through heating to decrease the viscosity or through pressure molding, it does not reach zero in the region other than the grating pitch. However, if the film thickness is uniform over the diffractive optical element 131, the influence to the whole light flux passing therethrough is even and, thus, there is no inconvenience in the performance as a diffraction optical element 131. It is rather important to make the film thickness uniform. Since in an optical element of short focus, the picture angle becomes large, if the resin thickness is large, due to the picture angle, the direction of light shifts within the element such that the correction effect reduces. For this reason, it is important that the resin film thickness is kept small as much as possible and that the element design is made while fully taking into account the picture angle and the resin thickness.

While in the fourth and fifth embodiments the recess or protrusion of the mold is formed by machining, it is not practically easy to machine it at high precision. In consideration of it, first, a mold for any one of the recess or protrusion for the mating may be formed by cutting. The thus produced mold for the recess or protrusion may then be transferred by using a photo-setting resin, for example, upon a glass substrate. Thereafter, a deposition film may be

formed upon the surface of the molding article and,
through nickel plating, an electroformed article is
produced. Subsequently, a fine shaping may be made to
the optically effective region of a mold of the recess
5 or protrusion having been molded first. Also, a
similar micro-processing may be made to the surface of
the electroformed article, completed. Here, by
providing a mark at the center so as to enable correct
adjustment of the center position, a mold can be
10 completed.

While the invention has been described with
reference to the structures disclosed herein, it is
not confined to the details set forth and this
application is intended to cover such modifications or
15 changes as may come within the purposes of the
improvements or the scope of the following claims.

20

25

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A diffractive optical element having plural
diffraction grating surfaces accumulated,
characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating
5 surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a
recess formed on an outside of one diffraction grating
surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion
formed on an outside of the other diffraction grating
surface; and that the pair of diffraction grating
10 surfaces are defined on materials having different
refractive indices and different dispersions and being
formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height of
blazed or binary, close to it, such that a largest
optical path difference to be applied to light rays
15 passing through the diffraction grating surfaces with
respect to plural wavelengths becomes equal to a
multiple, by an integral number, of the wavelength.

2. A diffractive optical element having plural
20 diffraction grating surfaces accumulated,
characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating
surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a
recess formed outside an optically effective region of
one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess
25 and/or a protrusion formed outside an optically
effective region of the other diffraction grating
surface; and that the pair of diffraction grating

surfaces are defined on materials having different refractive indices and different dispersions and being formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height close to it, such that a largest optical path difference to be applied to light rays passing through the diffraction grating surfaces with respect to each of plural wavelengths becomes equal to a multiple, by an integral number, of the wavelength.

3. A diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess formed on an outside of one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion formed on an outside of the other diffraction grating surface; and that the pair of diffraction grating surfaces are defined on materials having different refractive indices and different dispersions and being formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height close to it, such that a diffraction efficiency of diffraction light of a particular order, such as one of positive and negative first order, with respect to plural wavelengths, becomes equal to or nearly equal to 100%.

4. A diffractive optical element having plural

diffraction grating surfaces accumulated,
characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating
surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a
recess formed outside an optically effective region of
5 one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess
and/or a protrusion formed outside an optically
effective region of the other diffraction grating
surface; and that the pair of diffraction grating
surfaces are defined on materials having different
10 refractive indices and different dispersions and being
formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height close
to it, such that a diffraction efficiency of
diffraction light of a particular order, such as one
of positive and negative first order, with respect to
15 plural wavelengths, becomes equal to or nearly equal
to 100%.

5. A diffractive optical element according to
any one of Claims 1 - 4, wherein the pair of
20 diffraction gratings are disposed opposed to each
other with a space such as by an air interposed
therebetween.

6. A diffractive optical element according to
25 any one of Claims 1 - 5, wherein the protrusion and
the recess have a sectional shape of one of a triangle
shape, a trapezoidal shape and a semi-circular shape.

7. A diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are mutually positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed on one diffraction grating surface, engages with a recess and/or a protrusion having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed on the other diffraction grating surface.

8. A diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, characterized in that: a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are mutually positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed outside an optically effective region of one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion having a sectional shape of one of a triangular shape, a trapezoidal shape, and a semi-circular shape, formed outside an optically effective region of the other diffraction grating surface.

9. A method of manufacturing a diffractive optical element as recited in any one of Claims 1 - 8, characterized by a process for fitting the protrusion as formed on the one diffraction grating into the
5 recess as formed on the other diffraction grating.

10. A method of manufacturing a diffractive optical element as recited in any one of Claims 1 - 8, characterized by a process in which, after one
10 diffraction grating surface is formed, another diffraction grating surface is formed by use of a mold, wherein a protrusion and/or a recess formed on the one diffraction grating surface is fitted into a recess and/or a protrusion formed on the mold for the
15 other diffraction grating surface, whereby these diffraction grating surfaces are mutually positioned and molding of the other diffraction grating surface is performed.

20 11. A method of manufacturing a diffractive optical element, comprising the steps of:
forming, upon a substrate, a first diffraction grating and a recess and/or a protrusion;
preparing a mold having a protrusion and/or a
25 recess to be engaged with the recess and/or the protrusion formed on the substrate, as well as a second diffraction grating pattern; and

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A diffractive optical element having plural diffraction grating surfaces accumulated, wherein a pair of diffraction grating surfaces are positioned so that a protrusion and/or a recess formed on an outside of one diffraction grating surface engages with a recess and/or a protrusion formed on an outside of the other diffraction grating surface, and wherein the pair of diffraction grating surfaces are defined on materials having different refractive indices and different dispersions and being formed into a kinoform, or a shape and a height of blazed or binary, close to it, such that a largest optical path difference to be applied to light rays passing through the diffraction grating surfaces with respect to plural wavelengths becomes equal to a multiple, by an integral number, of the wavelength.

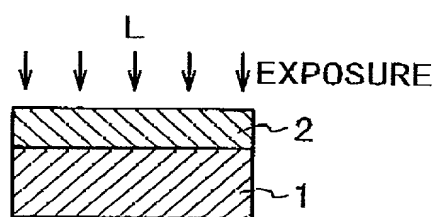


FIG. 1A

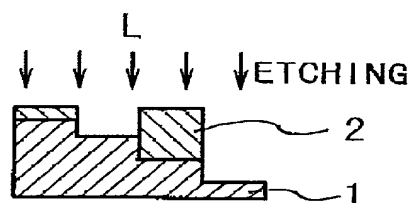


FIG. 1F

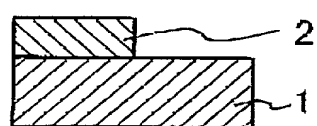


FIG. 1B

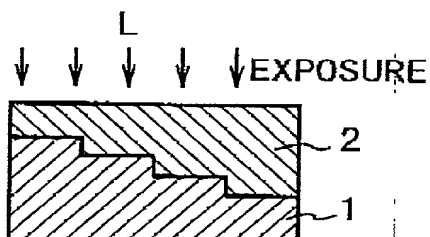


FIG. 1G

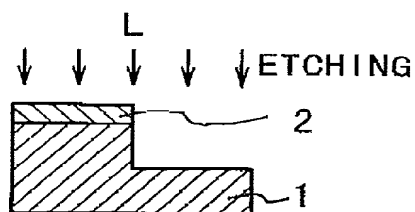


FIG. 1C

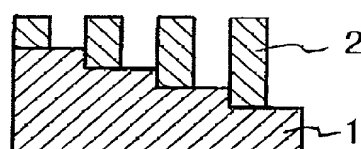


FIG. 1H

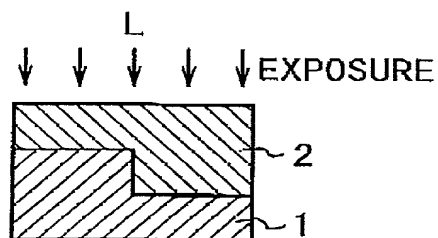


FIG. 1D

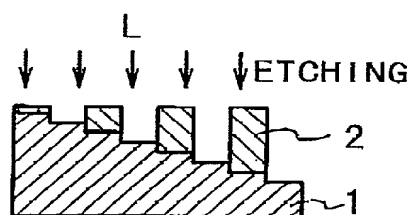


FIG. 11

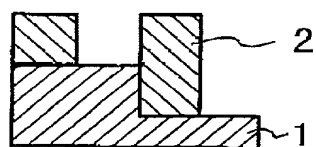


FIG. 1E



FIG. 1J

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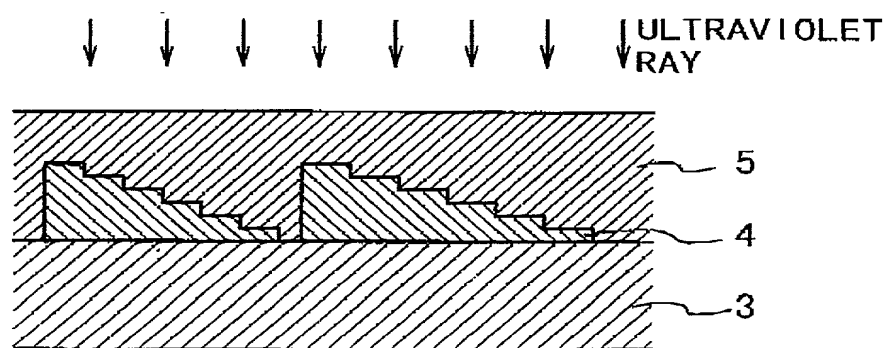


FIG. 2A

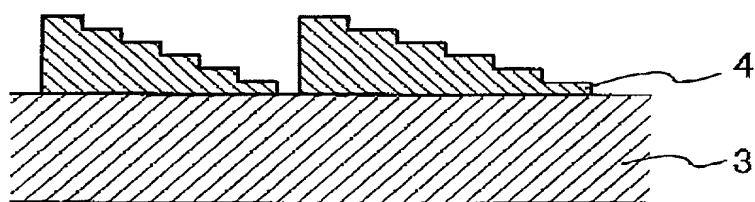


FIG. 2B

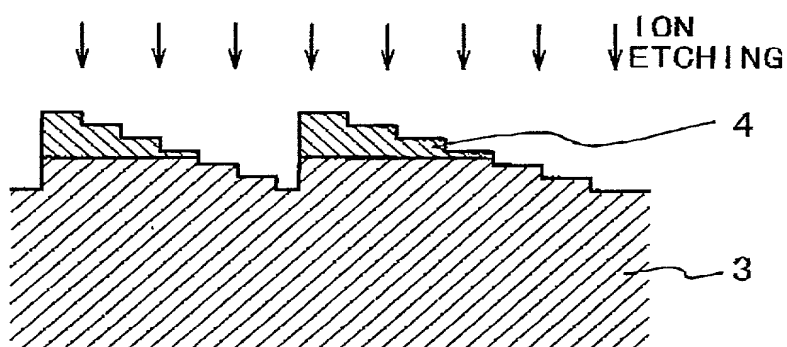


FIG. 2C

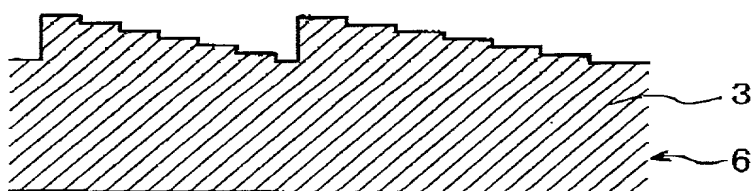


FIG. 2D

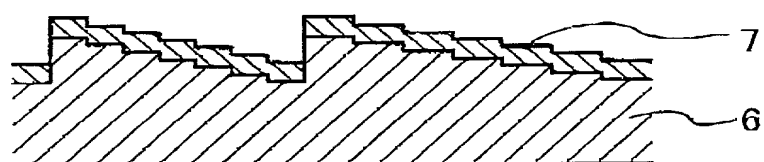


FIG. 2E

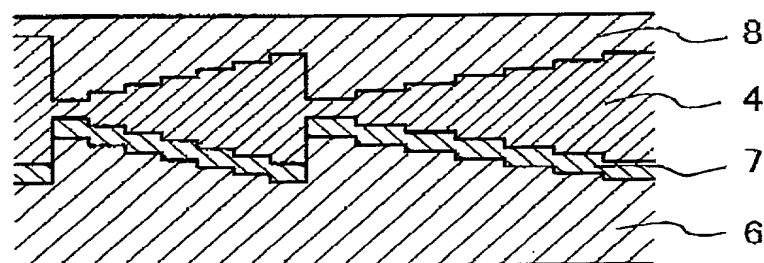
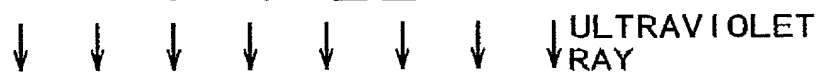


FIG. 2F

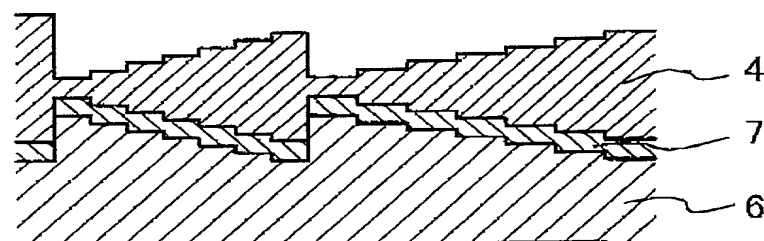


FIG. 2G

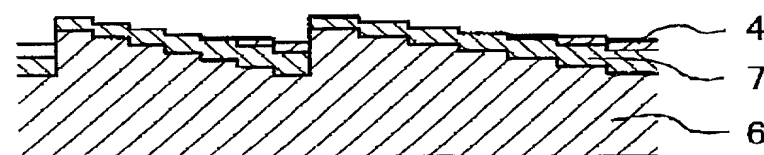


FIG. 2H

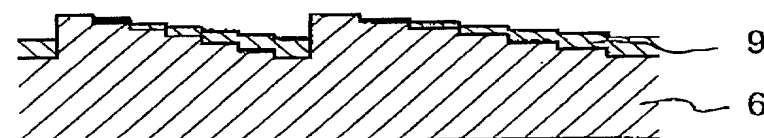


FIG. 21



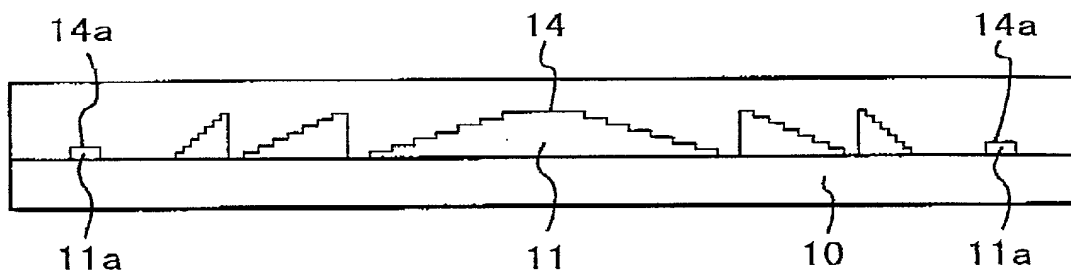


FIG. 5

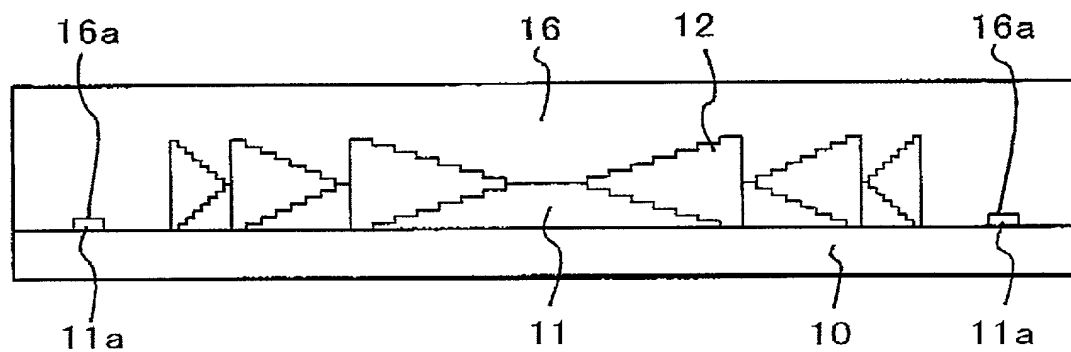


FIG. 6

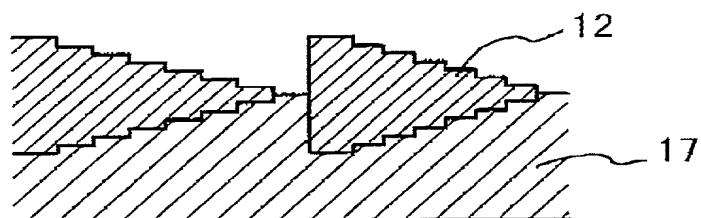


FIG. 7

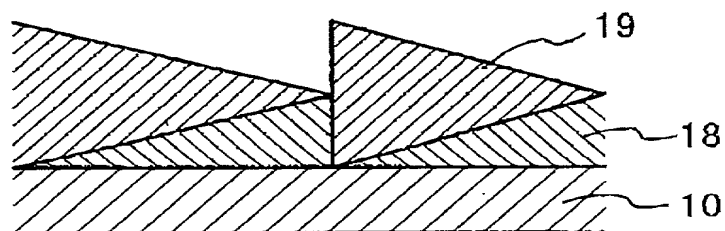


FIG. 8

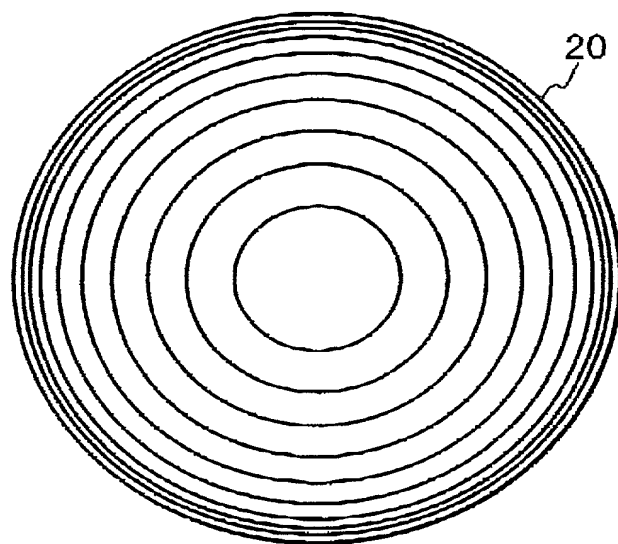


FIG. 9

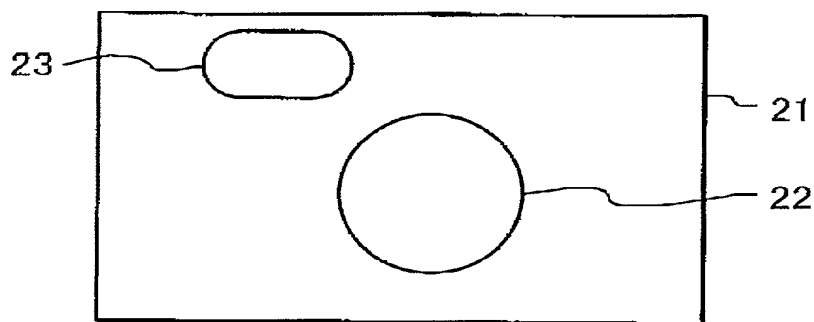


FIG. 10

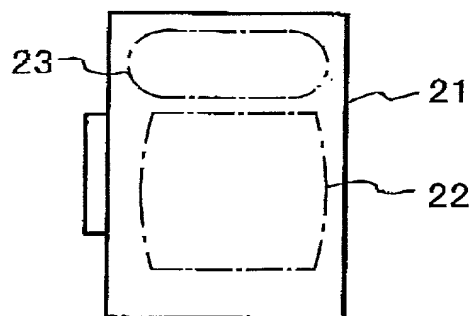


FIG. 11

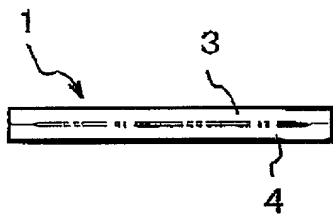


FIG. 12

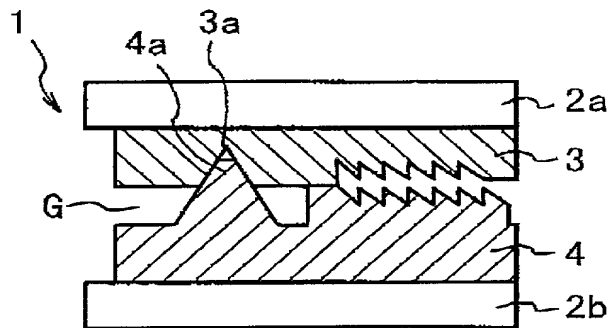


FIG. 13



FIG. 14

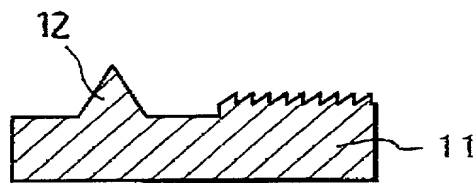


FIG. 15



FIG. 16

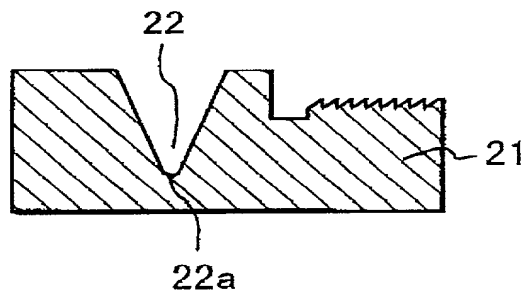


FIG. 17

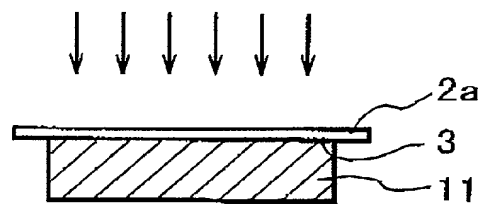


FIG. 18

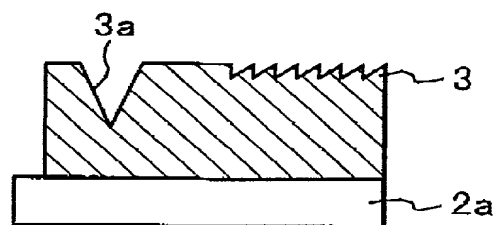


FIG. 19

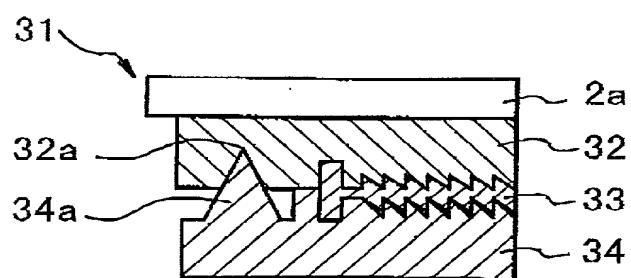


FIG. 20

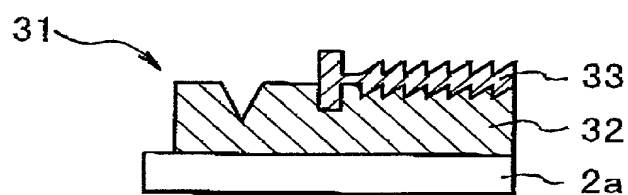


FIG. 21

**COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR PATENT APPLICATION**
(Page 1)

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled **DIFFRACTIVE OPTICAL ELEMENT AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURE OF THE SAME**

the specification of which ☒ is attached hereto ☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application No. or PCT International Application No. _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR §1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d) or §365(b), of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT international application which designates at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Country	Application No.	Filed (Day/Mo./Yr.)	(Yes/No) Priority Claimed
Japan	10-287294	24/September/1998	Yes
Japan	11-250851	03/September/1999	Yes

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT international application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

Application No.	Filed (Day/Mo./Yr.)	Status (Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
-----------------	---------------------	---------------------------------------

I hereby appoint the practitioners associated with the firm and Customer Number provided below to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith, and direct that all correspondence be addressed to the address associated with that Customer Number:

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
Customer Number: 05514

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full Name of Sole or First Inventor MASAAKI NAKABAYASHI

Inventor's signature _____

Date _____ Citizen/Subject of Japan

Residence 4-8-2 Isogo, Isogo-ku, Yokohama-shi, Kanagawa-ken, Japan

Post Office Address c/o CANON KABUSHIKI KAISHA, 3-30-2 Shimomaruko,
Ohta-ku, Tokyo, Japan

(Page 2)

Second Inventor's signature _____

Residence 2-4-7 Shimouma, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Ohta-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Third Inventor's signature _____

Residence 25-11-707 Akashicho, Hiratsuka-shi, Kanagawa-ken, Japan

Ohta-ku, Tokyo, Japan